

REPORT
OF
SPECIAL SUBCOMMITTEE
ON
DEFENSE OF SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
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REPORT OF SPECIAL SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE OF SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES

Pursuant to the direction of the chairman of the House Committee on Armed Services, the Honorable Carl Vinson, a special two-man subcommittee proceeded to Colorado Springs, Colo., during the period March 30-April 1, 1962, to confer with military authorities at Headquarters, North American Air Defense Command, concerning problems in connection with the defense of the southeastern United States against airborne attack, either by enemy missiles or aircraft.

In order that the subject may be placed in clearer perspective, some discussion of the background which led to the formation of Norad and the location of defense capabilities against enemy air attack is required.

In the early 1950's, it was conceded that practically the entire enemy air threat against the continental United States and Canada was confined to the long-range bomber capability of the Soviet Union. In connection with that assessment, it was presumed that any enemy air attack would be directed across the pole and that a proper defense against it would necessitate the concentration of our defenses in the northern portion of the United States and Canada.

The weapons systems then available or under development to perform this defense mission consisted of the Nike-Ajax and its successor, Nike-Hercules, fighter interceptor aircraft, the Bomarc missile, and associated radar detection systems such as the Dew-Line, the Mid-Canada Line, the Pine Tree Line, SAGE, Missile Master, and other types of radar support equipment.

Having concluded that the threat would come from the north, the available defensive systems were deployed in a manner which was calculated to do two things: (1) protect industrial complexes in the northern half of the United States, and (2) protect SAC bases in order to insure that SAC would retain a retaliatory capability.

The implementation of the foregoing program resulted in the establishment of numerous Nike-Ajax and Nike-Hercules ground-to-air missile units around major industrial cities and strategic air bases. Bomarc units, in limited numbers, were deployed in coastal areas. On the Atlantic coast, none was deployed south of Norfolk, Va. Fighter interceptor bases were established at numerous locations as far north as possible within the continental United States.

Within the time frame in which these decisions were made and implementation occurred, the actions were undoubtedly valid. The bomber threat was principally from the north and to the south there appeared to be nothing but friendly nations. But the situation which prevails today is vastly different, making the threat nationwide rather than geographically limited.

Within the past 10 years, the concentration of industry, defense, and other activities of national importance has made the contribution of the southeastern portion of the United States to the overall national effort of prime importance.

One need only consider the activities which now lie in a broad arc extending from Norfolk, Va., southward along the gulf coast to Houston, Tex. In addition to the large and expanding population centers within the area, we have now concentrated a major effort in the exploration of outer space. These new activities extend from the establishment of the new Space Center at Houston, to test sites in Mississippi, work on the Saturn booster in Louisiana, the launching complex at Cape Canaveral, and the prime scientific efforts which are conducted at Huntsville, Ala. Important segments of the aviation industry, now making a major contribution to our national defense, are located within the area. New Polaris submarine facilities have been established at Charleston. Interspersed throughout the area are major defense activities of all the military services, including bases for Strategic Air Force units.

While the vastly increased importance of this area to the overall national effort is clear, it is equally clear that no significant effort has been made to provide a degree of protection which is comparable in any degree to that previously provided for similar areas in the northern half of the Nation.

From the standpoint of local defense against intercontinental ballistic missiles, the entire Nation is equally vulnerable. But the threat from hostile aircraft and airbreathing missiles which can be launched from ships, submarines, or hostile territory remains a continuing concern to southeastern United States. This is accentuated by the marked political change which has occurred in those nations to the south and southeast of the United States.

Central and South America present many areas of political foment with the conflict between freedom and democracy remaining in doubt. The same situation presents itself in certain areas of Africa. But the most immediate concern is the establishment of a devout Communist government in Cuba, within 90 miles of Florida.

The Soviet buildup of a military capability in Cuba continues at an increased tempo. The most modern jet fighter aircraft appear in increasing numbers on Cuban airfields. Soviet "technicians" continue to arrive in increasing numbers and there can be no assurance that this buildup does not forecast the establishment of a missile capability in Cuba as a hostile threat to continental United States.

While fighter aircraft have known limitations as to range and weapon-carrying capability, this threat cannot be ignored. If it is contended that the Soviet Union would not release atomic weapons for these aircraft to Cuban forces, there can be no guarantee that such weapons would not be available to Soviet military personnel operating from Cuban bases, at the chosen moment.

In addition, we must now concede an in-flight refueling capability for long-range Soviet aircraft, with reasonable assurance that Cuba, as well as some other possible areas to the south, would be available as staging areas for in-flight refueling of Soviet bombers. No one can now successfully contend that the sole threat of Soviet attack by aircraft or airbreathing missiles is limited to the northern approach. The threat is now total and our defensive capabilities must be adjusted to meet it.

The subcommittee recommends that immediate action be instituted to place both improved fighter interceptor and ground-to-air missile protection in strategic areas in southeastern United States. As a

corollary to this capability, a marked improvement in radar intercept and communications capability would be essential.

The subcommittee recognizes that the optimum which could be accomplished in this area at this time is firm planning for a positive approach. Therefore, the subcommittee recommends that the Secretary of Defense be urged to institute such plans and be prepared to report to the House Committee on Armed Services in January 1963 the positive steps which have been taken to overcome the deficiencies in the defense of southeastern United States.

Respectfully submitted.

L. MENDEL RIVERS.
F. EDWARD HÉBERT.

AUGUST 23, 1962.